

VZCZCXRO4267
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHRY #0568/01 2731715
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 291715Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2973
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000568

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: JUNIOR OFFICERS PLOT MILITARY COUP D,ETAT

REF: CONAKRY 0520

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. A core group of junior military officers, under the leadership of Major &Idi Amin⁸ Camara told the DATT that they are planning to orchestrate a bloodless coup in the coming weeks. Claiming to be working closely with various youth leaders as well as the leader of the May military mutiny, Claude Pivi (aka Coplan), the group plans to overthrow the current regime in order to install a transitional civilian government leading to presidential elections. The coup plotters appear to have a specific, detailed strategy in place for initially seizing control, but were much more vague about how the transitional government would work. Contacts emphasized that they will be looking to the international community for assistance in navigating a post-Conte transition. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) A core group of junior military officers met with the DATT on September 26 to advise the USG of their plans to orchestrate a bloodless coup d,etat in the coming weeks. The officers are part of the &19th promotion,⁸ an elite and well respected corps of university educated officers that entered into service approximately 15 years ago, which also includes some police and civil servants. The group claimed that a gendarme officer known as Commander Aboubacar Sidiki Camara (rank equivalent to major), nicknamed &Idi Amin,⁸ is leading the initiative. Major Camara did not attend the meeting since the GoG,s intelligence service reportedly keeps him under surveillance.

¶3. (S) Sources told DATT that they wanted to keep the USG advised of their intent so as to avoid surprises, but that they were not looking to be dissuaded from their goal. They said that they would continue to provide as much information as possible, but that they would not reveal the actual date and time of the coup attempt, although they hinted that they may take action within the next few weeks.

¶4. (S) The coup plotters said that they have been coordinating closely with youth leaders who have been planning a broader youth movement. Contacts essentially laid out the exact same objectives articulated by the youths in recent weeks (reftel): dissolution of the entire government including the National Assembly to be followed by a transitional council. They specifically mentioned respected religious leader and Catholic Archbishop at the Vatican, Robert Sara, who is Guinean, as the ideal person to head up the transitional council. As has been the case recently with the youths, contacts appeared divided as to whether they would demand the president,s resignation or not, although they stated that they would essentially force the president to retire to his village, possibly leaving him as president in name only.

¶5. (S) Contacts also indicated that they have been working with the May mutiny leader, Claude Pivi (aka &Coplan⁸).

The officers said that they plan to use Pivi in the downtown area near the presidential palace because people are &afraid8 of him and because he is capable of pulling together significant numbers of lower ranking soldiers. They added that Pivi,s mutineers seized arsenals of heavy weaponry, such as rocket propelled grenade launchers, during the mutiny, which are still in the mutineers, possession at Camp Alpha Yaya. Contacts emphasized that Pivi is not one of the core coup plotters, and that they will neutralize him by sending him back to the Forest Region with a new house and plenty of cash once the coup is successful.

¶6. (S) The young officers articulated what appeared to be a comprehensive and detailed plan to overthrow the current government. They claimed to have strong support from various groups within the military, with a strategy in place for having loyal forces deployed at key points throughout the city. Contacts stated that a contingent of gendarmes was already positioned in Kamsar to neutralize any threat from the president,s son and notorious narcotics kingpin, Ousmane Conte, once the coup is underway. They also had a complicated communications strategy involving multiple cell phone networks and newly created phone numbers. Contacts told DATT that they are receiving significant financial support for the coup through diverted funds coming from a sympathist in the military payroll office. The officers added that they plan to close the airport in order to prevent "the dogs from leaving," referring to members of the president's entourage.

¶7. (S) According to the officers, their only objective is to wrest power away from Conte so that they can turn the

CONAKRY 00000568 002 OF 002

government over to civilian leadership leading to presidential elections. Some officers said that the transitional council would need at least 12 months to organize elections while others said that six months would be adequate.

¶8. (S) The group told the DATT that they are not looking for USG support for the coup, but rather, for help in establishing a transitional civilian government once the coup is over. They did not go into details about what they thought such a transitional government might look like. Contacts emphasized that they did not want to be &condemned8 by the USG for organizing a military coup d,etat.

¶9. (S) The officers said that it is important to take action soon in order to avoid further security problems. They noted that the GoG will issue its last one million franc (\$200) payoff of the Bulletin Rouge to individual soldiers on October 5, which was the major demand of the mutineers in May. Contacts suggested that mutinous elements of the military may be looking to demand additional payments in the months ahead. They also mentioned the youths, efforts to coalesce as a possible point of conflict since the youths don,t have the weapons necessary to effect the regime change they are pushing for.

COMMENT

¶10. (S) Despite his sobriquet, Commander &Idi Amin8 Camara is perceived as an intelligent, respected officer with widespread support from junior officer and rank and file soldiers. However, Pivi is seen as a volatile element prone to bribes, who may not be content to retire to the Forest once he gets close to power. While the organizers appear to have a clear strategy in place for pulling off the coup, their plans for a post-Conte transition are vague. Much of the population has been quietly advocating for a coup for several months, but there is no guarantee that a military driven transition will evolve into a civilian government

interested in advancing democracy.

¶11. (S) In recent months we have seen a number of failed movements aiming to ultimately either overturn or circumvent Conte. This potential coup may end up being yet another failed attempt. The longer the organizers wait to put their plan in motion, the more susceptible they will be to discovery and/or political infighting. At the same time, economic desperation is increasing with the franc devaluing against the dollar by eight percent in the last few weeks alone. People are generally frustrated with Guinea,s continued lack of socio-political progress with many contacts feeling that nothing can change while Conte is still in power. Many Guineans seem to be simply waiting) waiting to see if Conte is finally going to die or if some other group is going to eventually push him out of office. Embassy convened an EAC today to discuss the security situation. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC